

Cal State L.A.'s Guide to

# LGBTQIPA+ LiFe ON caMPUS

Presented by the Gender and  
Sexuality Resource Center  
Cross Cultural Centers

"PRIDE means self-acceptance in the face of social ridicule. It means being true to yourself without excuses—acknowledging personal well-being, and being secure in who, what and how you live your life. In essence, it has very little to do with being gay—as much as being a healthy and fulfilled individual."

Dr. Bryant Alexander,  
former Acting Dean, College of Arts and Letters, Cal State L.A.  
current Dean, College of Communication and Fine Arts, Loyola Marymount University

# WHAT DOES LGBTQIPA+ STAND FOR?

## Sexual Orientations:

**Lesbian:** Womyn sexually attracted to womyn.

**Gay:** Men attracted to men.

**Bisexual:** A person whose attraction is not limited to one sex or one gender, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. This used to be defined as a person who is attracted to both genders or both sexes, but since there are not only two sexes (see intersex and transsexual) and there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition can be redefined to fit the person's self-identification.

**Pansexual:** A person who is fluid in sexual orientation and/or gender or sex identity.

**Asexuality:** A person who is not sexually attracted to any gender.

**Questioning:** Exploring sexuality.

## Romantic Orientations:

Refers to an individual's pattern of romantic attraction to men, women, neither gender, either gender, or another gender:

Homo-romantic, Bi-romantic, Pan-romantic, A-romantic, etc.

# WHAT DOES LGBTQIPA+ STAND FOR?

## Gender Identities:

**Transgender:** is an identity for people whose gender identity differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with.

**Genderqueer:** A person whose gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** A person who does not conform to society's expectations of gender expression based on the gender binary, expectations of masculinity and femininity, or how they should identify their gender.

**Agender:** A person who is internally ungendered or has not felt a sense of gender identity.

**Two-Spirit:** American Indian/First Nations/Native American persons who have attributes of both men and women, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans). Their dress is usually mixture of men's and women's articles and they are seen as a separate or third gender.

**Trans\***: An umbrella term for the transgender, cross-dresser, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, and agender community.

## Umbrella Terms:

**+:** Sometimes used at the end of "LGBTQ+" to represent multiple identities to make a shortened, but inclusive acronym.

**Queer:** Sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQPA+ people; a political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid; a simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires—for example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer. (Many older LGBT people feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it)

**Trans\*:** Sometimes used as an 'umbrella' or all-inclusive term for the Transgender, Genderqueer, Gender Non-Conforming, Two-Spirit, and Agender community.

**Ally:** Alliance with/in the LGBTQIPA+ community.

# GREETING FROM THE CCC DIRECTOR

## Hello!

On behalf of the Cross Cultural Centers at Cal State L.A., I extend a heartfelt greeting to you! We pride ourselves on being a vibrant, energetic, and supportive space for you. And I want to personally invite you to stop by and see how we're working to support you while at Cal State L.A. and beyond.

I want you to engage with us, feel validated, and stay at Cal State L.A. until you graduate. Will you accept that challenge?

Reflect on the college experience you'd like to have. And make it happen! Maybe you want to get more involved outside the classroom, with clubs, organizations, or events on campus. Maybe you want deeper and more meaningful relationships with friends and teachers. Maybe you found yourself on the wrong path in the past, but know you want to get back on the right track at CSULA.

The Cross Cultural Centers and GSRC are great places to connect and find your second family!

As well, I want you to know that I am here for you... along with the other staff, faculty, and students at Cal State L.A. You don't need to struggle alone. And when you succeed, we all succeed. So feel free to call on me and the other resources listed in this guide... for anything.

Take care and have a great year!

Best,

**Frederick Smith**

*Director, Cross Cultural Centers*

[fsmith@cslanet.calstatela.edu](mailto:fsmith@cslanet.calstatela.edu)

(323) 343-5001

# GREETING FROM THE GENDER & SEXUALITY RESOURCE CENTER

## Hello!

On behalf of the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC), I extend a greeting of familiar excitement, optimism, and drive towards a year of new beginnings. As the Coordinator of the GSRC, I encourage you to use Cal State L.A.'s Guide to LGBTQIPA+ Life on Campus as a reference for supportive organizations, resource pockets, and community building opportunities. Originally founded in 1976 as the Women's Resource Center with a mission to empower and mobilize students around women's liberation, the GSRC strives to connect students, faculty, and staff through a shared intention of raising awareness on issues affecting women and the LGBTQIPA+ community. We hope to increase visibility and promote the welfare and dignity of women and the LGBTQIPA+ community by providing a safe environment for social interaction and politically/socially conscious development. The GSRC also provides private space for breastfeeding and offers free counseling to all students.

We welcome all students, faculty, and interested persons to stop by the GSRC and join in alliance for fundamental rights, dignity, and Pride!

In Solidarity Always,  
**Denise Carlos, MSW**  
*Coordinator, Gender and  
Sexuality Resource Center*  
[dcarlos@cslanet.calstatela.edu](mailto:dcarlos@cslanet.calstatela.edu)  
(323) 343-3371

# GeNDER & SEXUALiTY REsOURCE CENTER

The Gender & Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC) – founded as the Women's Resource Center in 1976 in response to the women's liberation movement at CSULA – is dedicated to creating safe and respectful learning spaces, catering specifically to the empowerment of Womyn, Men, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQIPA+) community.

We pride ourselves in challenging societal norms that have been used historically to oppress and marginalize, while raising awareness on contemporary issues we face.

**CROSS CULTURAL CENTERS,  
UNIVERSITY-STUDENT UNION  
ROOM 206 | (323) 343-5001**



## The GSRC is open and available to all.

### At the GSRC you will find:

Dialogue Groups for self-identified Womyn, Men, Genderqueer, & Trans\* folk.

The Queer Connection (TQC), Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance (FMLA), and Gender Q (GQ) student organization members.

Books and Magazines on Gender, Sexuality, Feminist Expression, Parenting, Identity, and Empowerment.

Programs and events that build awareness on issues concerning Women, Men, Trans\* folk and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Trans\*, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIPA+) community.

Information to outside agencies focusing on various issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, health clinics, LGBTQIPA+ safe spaces shelters, etc...

Individual Counseling and Crisis Intervention leading to on and off-campus referrals.

Space for open-minded dialogue.

Microwave/ community refrigerator.

Breastfeeding area.

Flat screen for screening of movies from our fabulous collection.

# STUDENT AND CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS

## The Queer Connection

The Queer Connection represents at large the members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Ally community at California State University Los Angeles. Our mission is to increase diversity among our community; provide assistance and support for members; and increase awareness on gender and sexuality issues within our community. Most of all, it's a place where you can be yourself.

Meetings are held every Thursday @ 3:15pm

Email us at [thequeerconnection@gmail.com](mailto:thequeerconnection@gmail.com)

[Facebook.com/csula.tqc](https://www.facebook.com/csula.tqc)



## Gender Q

Gender Q is an organization with the intent to create a voice and provide a space for the Trans\* community, including, but not limited to: Gender-Nonconforming, Genderqueer, Gender-Questioning, Two-Spirit, Allies, and all those affected by society's constructed and institutionalized gender binaries (everyone)

Meetings are held every Tuesday @ 3:15pm

Email us at [genderq2013@gmail.com](mailto:genderq2013@gmail.com)

[Facebook.com/genderq.csula](https://www.facebook.com/genderq.csula)



# STUDENT AND CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS

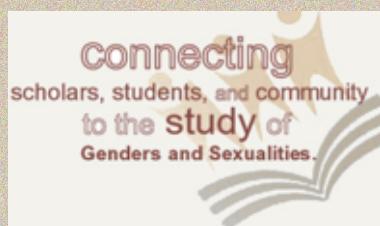
## The Center for Study of Genders and Sexualities

The Center for the Study of Genders and Sexualities lives at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, ability, age, class, culture, and nation. We believe that knowledge flows from the connections among faculty, students, and the communities within and beyond the university.

Location: CSULA King Hall D4050

T (323)343-6549 | F (323) 343-6463

Email: [csgs@calstatela.edu](mailto:csgs@calstatela.edu)



## The Cross Cultural Centers

The Cross Cultural Centers provide an inclusive and friendly space that allows students to be themselves. With an emphasis on serving underrepresented communities, the Centers are open to individuals from all ethnic and gender backgrounds. Please stop by to find out more information or to simply relax and meet with friends.

University-Student Union, 2nd Floor, Room 206

(323) 343-5001

[f facebook.com/csulaccc](https://facebook.com/csulaccc) csulaccc csulaccc



CROSS CULTURAL  
CENTERS

# CELEBRATION OF PRIDE GRADUATES

Every June | University-Student Union, Los Angeles, CA

The PRIDE Graduate Celebration is an intimate ceremony that celebrates the academic achievements of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Ally Community. If you are interested in being a member of the Pride Graduate Celebration Committee or participating in the ceremony, please contact GSRC staff at (323) 343-3370 or visit the Cross Cultural Centers, University-Student Union Room 206.



# FACULTY/STAFF MENTORS

As part of the LGBTQIPA+ student on this campus, it is very important to connect with various faculty and staff members that could be instrumental in your academic and social development. Fortunately each of the people listed below personally responded and shared in the excitement of wanting to outreach to students. Hope you will take advantage of this opportunity.

## Luz Borjon

*Transfer Student EOP Counselor  
Educational Opportunity Program*  
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## Dionne Espinoza, Ph. D.

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University-Student Union*  
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## Denise Carlos, MSW

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(323) 343-5001  
U-SU 2nd floor, Room 206

## Frederick Smith

*Director, Cross Cultural Centers*  
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(323) 343-5248  
U-SU 2nd floor 206

## Melina Abdullah, Ph. D.

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(323) 343-2294  
KH CB3024

## Talia Bettcher, Ph. D.

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E & T A423

## John Ramirez, Ph. D.

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Department of Communication Studies*  
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(323) 343-4207  
MUS 106

## Rhonda Mitchell

*Programs Coordinator  
Cross Cultural Centers*  
(323) 343-5001  
[rmitchell@cslanet.calstatela.edu](mailto:rmitchell@cslanet.calstatela.edu)

## Diana P. Victa, M.A.

*Cross Cultural Programs Coordinator*  
(323) 343-5001  
U-SU Room 206

# Academic Resources

Below you will find helpful resources for your academic journey at CSULA.

## Academic Advisement Center

*LIB PW 1040A*

(323) 343-3150

## Student Support Programs

*LIB PW 1040C*

(323) 343-3965

## Tutorial Center

*LIB PW 1062*

(323) 343-3971

## Library, John F. Kennedy Memorial

*LIB N 1st Floor*

(323) 343-4927

## Counseling (EOP)

*SA 215*

(323) 343-4367

## Writing Center

*LIB PW 2097*

(323) 343-5350

## Arts and Letters

*MUS 221*

(323) 343-4015

## Athletics

*PE 110*

(323) 343-3096

## Business and Economics (Graduate)

*SH C256B*

(323) 343-5156

## Business and Economics (Undergraduate)

*SH C256B*

(323) 343-2810

## Education (Graduate Studies Office)

*KH D2070*

(323) 343-4303

## Education (Teacher Credential Programs)

*KH D2078*

(323) 343-4342

## Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology

*E&T A241*

(323) 343-5604

## Health and Human Services

*FA 238*

(323) 343-5500

## Natural and Social Sciences

*KH D1044*

(323) 343-4689

## Undeclared Majors

*LIB PW 1040A*

(323) 343-3150

# LGBTQ RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

## L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center: McDonald/Wright Building

1625 N. Schrader Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90028

(323) 993-7400

The Center's wide array of services includes: free HIV/AIDS care and medications for those most in need; housing, food, clothing, and support for homeless LGBTQ-parent families and seniors; legal services etc...

## L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center: The Village at Ed Gould Plaza

1125 N. McCadden Place Los Angeles, CA 90038

(213) 590-7605 | [www.lagaycenter.org](http://www.lagaycenter.org)

The Center's wide array of services includes: Career Center, Conversation Groups, Social Network Groups (see below), Cultural Arts, Galleries, Theatres, Computer/Internet Center, Volunteer Services, LifeWorks Youth Services, etc...

Bi-osphere: Every 2nd & 4th Monday, 8-9:30pm.

Men's Speakeasy: Every Tuesday, 8pm.

Lesbian Chat: Every Monday, 8pm.

Transgender Perceptions: Every Friday, 8-9:30pm.

*(Allies are welcome only on 1st Friday of the month)*

## LifeWorks

1125 N. McCadden Place Los Angeles, CA 90028

(323) 860-7373 | [www.lifeworksla.org](http://www.lifeworksla.org)

LifeWorks is the youth development and mentoring program of the LA Gay & Lesbian Center. We offer one on one, peer, and group mentoring opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth ages 12-24. Our goal is to help LGBTQ youth to realize their goals and dreams with a safe space, positive and affirming role models, and workshops & activities that are fun and educational.

## Bienestar La Casa

5326 E. Beverly Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90022

(323) 727-7896 | [www.bienestar.org](http://www.bienestar.org)

Bienestar is a grass-root, non-profit community services organization established in 1989. Bienestar originated as a direct result of neglect and non-existent HIV/AIDS services for the Latino community.

## The Wall Las Memorias Project

111 North Avenue 56 Los Angeles, CA 90042

(323) 343-257-1056 | [www.thewalllasmemorias.org](http://www.thewalllasmemorias.org)

The purpose of The Wall Las Memorias Project is to preserve the AIDS monument as an inspirational tool to educate the community about cultural denial, HIV/AIDS and to promote activism and healthy living.

# LGBTQ RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

## Colors LGBTQ Youth Counseling & Community Center

3435 W Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026

(213) 417-3420 | [www.colorsyouth.org](http://www.colorsyouth.org)

A safe space for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Genderqueer, Intersex, Fluid, Pansexual, Questioning, Allied, or label-free youths. Offers support, engagement with others, healing, and a place to celebrate who you are. Offers counseling (individual, couples, family, and group), and will eventually provide social and creative activities, community building, and educational support. Office Hours: Tu-Th 3pm-9pm; Sat 10am-6pm. Spanish spoken. ADM REQ: LGBTQIA or label-free youth ages 24 years and under. All services are FREE.

## PFLAG Los Angeles

[www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org)

We are parents and children, brothers and sisters, grandparents and friends. We are gay and lesbian, straight, bisexual, and transgender. We are Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and non-religious. We are united by a commitment to make a safe place for people to come and talk about their experiences relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Check the website for a local chapter near you! (LA, South LA, Silverlake, San Gabriel Valley, Westwood, Long Beach, OC, and more)

## Gender Justice LA

6815 Willoughby Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90038

(323)960-9279 | [www.gjla.org](http://www.gjla.org) | [www.facebook.com/GenderJusticeLA](http://www.facebook.com/GenderJusticeLA)

Gender Justice LA is a grassroots organization that is building the power of the transgender and gender non-conforming community here in LA. We use community organizing and leadership development to make concrete changes in the lives of all trans people, especially low-income trans people of color. We seek to build our community's power to fight for racial, social and economic justice.

## Teatro QPOC

[www.adelinaanthony.com](http://www.adelinaanthony.com)

TEATRO QPOC is a safe, energizing space for queer people of color to study and practice performance/ theater arts. The workshops are taught from our feminist, queer, people of color, indigenous histories and methodologies rooted in progressive, spiritual practices. The workshops were designed by lesbian Xicana artist, Adelina Anthony. For more information on future sessions send an email to Adelina Anthony ([xiqana@gmail.com](mailto:xiqana@gmail.com)) and put TEATRO QPOC in the subject line.

## In The Meantime

4067 W Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90019

(323) 733-4868 | [www.inthemeantimesmen.org](http://www.inthemeantimesmen.org)

In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. is purposed to enrich, empower, and extend the lives of intergenerational black men, respectful of sexual orientation, through social, educational, health and wellness programs and services.

# PLACES TO VENTURE OUT ON THE TOWN

Los Angeles— Los Angeles is an amazing city full of a cultural diversity and an artistic history that is rich and makes it an excellent travel destination for the traveler who is seeking interesting and unique things to do. In addition to "Hollywood" Los Angeles is where you can sip coffee or a martini next to a budding musician, comedian and even a puppeteer. There are so many creative people and places in Los Angeles that we think that you will have to come back here often to experience all that it has to offer. There are multitudes of LGBT friendly places to go, restaurants to try and also Hotels that are gay owned and operated.

## 18+

### Tigerheat (Thursdays)

1735 Vine Street

Hollywood, CA 90028

(323) 462-8900

[www.avalonhollywood.com/tiger-heat](http://www.avalonhollywood.com/tiger-heat)

### Arena (Wednesdays)

6655 Santa Monica Blvd.

Hollywood, CA 90038

(323) 462-1291

[www.arenanightclub.com](http://www.arenanightclub.com)

### RAGE (Thursdays – Sundays)

8911 Santa Monica Blvd.

West Hollywood, CA 90069

(310) 652-7055

[www.ragewesthollywood.com](http://www.ragewesthollywood.com)

### The Catch (Saturdays)

4067 W Pico Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90019

(323) 734-8849

[www.catchonenightclub.com](http://www.catchonenightclub.com)

## 21+

### The Abbey

692 N. Robertson Blvd.

West Hollywood, CA 90069

(310) 289-8410

[www.abbeyfoodandbar.com](http://www.abbeyfoodandbar.com)

### Micky's

8857 Santa Monica Blvd.

West Hollywood, CA 90069

(310) 657-1176

[www.mickys.com](http://www.mickys.com)

### Fubar

7994 Santa Monica Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90046

(323) 654-0396

[www.fubarla.com](http://www.fubarla.com)

### Akbar

4356 Sunset Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90029

(323) 665-6810

[www.akbarsilverlake.com](http://www.akbarsilverlake.com)

### Club Chico

2915 W Beverly Blvd.

Montebello, CA 90640

(323) 721-3403

[www.clubchico.com](http://www.clubchico.com)

# HATE CRIMES AGAINST THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Hate crime reported on the basis of sexual orientation are increasing. Reported hate crimes based on sexual orientation are at an all-time high. In 1999, there was a 4.5 percent increase in reported hate crimes against gays and lesbians, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program--making them the third highest category reported. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation have more than tripled, since the FBI began collecting statistics in 1991. (Statistics on Anti-Gay Hate Crime [PDF])

Hate crimes are generally UNDERREPORTED. Unfortunately, FBI statistics only offer a glimpse of the problem. It is widely recognized that hate crimes based on sexual orientation often go unreported due to fear and stigmatization.

Hate crimes are NOT the same as other violent crimes. They are meant to send a message to an entire group or community. It is a form of domestic terrorism against a particular group or religion. Hate crimes legislation does not focus on the perpetrator's ideas but rather on criminal actions based upon those ideas. America takes pride in being a country where tolerance for others is held in high regard. When one group is singled out for violence, a strong response is needed. For example, when someone sets fire to a synagogue or church, it is taken more seriously than other incidents of arson. (Questions and Answers: Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act)

Federal law is inadequate. The federal statute, more than 30 years old and currently used to prosecute hate violence in America, is in dire need of updating. It does not cover hate violence based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

State laws are not adequate, either. Currently, only 23 states and the District of Columbia include sexual orientation in their hate crimes statutes. Twenty states have hate crimes laws that do not cover sexual orientation, and eight states have no hate crimes statutes whatsoever. Does your state's Hate Crimes Laws include sexual orientation?

Two federal statutes include "sexual orientation" but offer little protection for gay and lesbian Americans. The 104th Congress reauthorized through 2002 the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which originally became law in 1990. This law calls for states and localities to voluntarily report all hate crimes to the FBI. The FBI is then mandated to compile these statistics into an annual report.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES?

## Realizing Sexuality and Gender Identity

Sexuality and gender identity are integral aspects of everyone's personal identity. Gender sex (male or female) and sexual desires all influence our sense of identity, emotional needs, interpersonal relationships and awareness of our bodies. Realizing same sex attraction or emerging gender identity issues is a process of self-awareness and acceptance of personal identity rather than a choice to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), cross gender norms or engage in same sex sexual behaviors.

Research indicates that many LGBT people are aware of their sexuality or gender identity at an early age. **Evidence indicates that 55% of same sex attracted youth realize their sexual difference around the age of puberty, while one third have realized this at a much earlier age.** However for many LGBT people issues of sexuality and gender identity are often not addressed until later stages in their lives, when people are able to access supportive environments and have the ability to be in more open and confident about their feelings.

## The Relationship between Gender Identity and Sexuality.

Many transgender people have experienced identifying as lesbians or gay men before realizing that their difference relates to gender identity rather than sexuality. This may reflect that lack of awareness and understanding of transsexuality in the broader community and/or personal denials or discomfort in confronting gender identity issues at an early age. While confronting sexuality issues may reflect part of the process of exploring gender identity issues for some transgender people, sexual behaviors sexuality does not necessarily relate to person's gender identity. Transgender people have varied sexualities, being heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian and gay. Gender identity relates to a persons sense of identity as a man, woman, trans, not their sexual practices.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES?

## Young People Identifying and Labeling

Adolescence is the stage in life where young people develop a sense of their own identity, often exploring issues of sexuality and gender identity. Since 1998 the amount of same sex attracted youth identifying as lesbian, gay or homosexual has increased, from 41% to 61% in 2004. This correlates with indicators that gender identity issues (transsexualism) are increasingly being identified in young children and teenagers. The increased awareness and willingness of young people to identify as LGBT is considered to reflect the increased social awareness, visibility and acceptance of same sex attraction, transsexualism and public LGBT identities in our current society.

However there are still many young people who while acknowledging same sex attractions will choose to avoid labels or identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Many young people are concerned if they label themselves as an LGBT person they will be judged or identified solely on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity, or it may limit their options to explore their sexuality in the future or are concerned that they are still unsure of their feelings towards sexuality or gender identity.

## The Process of Coming Out

Coming out is an integral aspect of incorporating one's sexuality or gender identity into their social and personal lives. This process often requires LGBT people to overcome negative values and beliefs relating to same sex attraction or gender identity issues, while also overcoming the fear of how other people will react to this information. In confronting these issues many LGBT people experience increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression. This often results from experiencing and verbally abused due to their sexuality or gender identity.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES?

## Experiences of Discrimination

Many LGBT young people experience interpersonal and indirect discrimination on the basis of sexuality or gender identity. In 2004 33% of same sex attracted young people reported experiencing unfair treatment, 44% experienced verbal abuse and 16% experienced physical abuse as a result of their sexuality. Transgender people are considered to experience far greater rates of discrimination on the basis of their gender identity than lesbians, gay men or bisexuals (LGB). Many transgender people are easily identified by members of the general public unlike some LGB people, and are consistently dealing with negative reactions and experiences of hostility. However LGBT young people also experience heterosexism on a daily basis. That is the assumption that everyone is and ought to be heterosexual and that gender identity issues do not exist. The affect of such attitudes often reinforce feelings of guilt, social isolation, not being 'normal' and the invisibility of LGBT people in the general community.

## Safe Sex Education

Many LGBT young people have difficulty in accessing information on safe sex practices for same sex partners. 80% of same sex attracted youth found sex education in schools useless or fairly useless due to the lack of information for same sex partners. This is compounded by the lack of information on safe sex practices for same sex partners in general sexual health resources. LGBT young people are most commonly using the internet, same sex attracted friends, the LGBT community and LGBT media to access information on safe sex practices. However information on contraception is still a concern for these young people. Ten percent of 15-18 year old same sex attract women who had engaged penetrative sex with a man had experienced being pregnant; and of these women 26% identified as a lesbian, exclusively attracted to women.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES?

## LGBT Students in Schools

Nearly 80% of the discrimination and abuse experienced by same sex attracted youth was experienced within school environments, with over 40% of these young people not feeling safe at school. These factors most likely influence the increased absentee and drop-out rates for LGBT youth compared to heterosexual students. Concerns related to supporting LGBT students are often complicated by their often invisible presence school environments. While sexuality is not generally a physically trait (easily identified) these students are also under pressure to conform to heterosexual norms to avoid discrimination, harassment and being outcast by others. The pressure to conceal sexuality or gender identity issues for LGBT students is reinforced by the lack of positive role models, LGBT teachers and other LGBT peers who they can approach for support and advice. Few schools offer educational resources that address LGBT issues and relationships that could support and assist LGBT students.

## The Importance of Support

Maintaining LGBT health and wellbeing is considered to be linked to the degree of support LGBT people have from family, friends, the wider community and the ability to access quality health care and welfare services. Social isolation is a primary concern for LGBT people in general. Not knowing other LGBT people, how to access support services or groups to address sexuality and gender identity issues or having visible LGBT role models in the community increases the sense isolation LGBT people experience. Accessing support has been shown to make a positive difference towards feeling safe, developing social networks and having a positive self-image. However many LGBT young people do not know how to access services or who to contact for support, and often face real concerns that parents or friends will find out about these issues as a result of accessing support.

## References

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MACGLHV (2002) What's the Difference? Health issues of major concern to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (GLBTI) Victorians. Department of Human Services: Victoria  
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# HOW CAN YOU PROVIDE a safe environment for LGBTQ+ & straight allies?

## 1 Make no assumption about sexuality.

If a student has not used pronoun when discussing a relationship, don't assume one. Use neutral language such as "Are you seeing anyone" instead of "Don't you have a boyfriend/Girlfriend". Let people label themselves.

## 2 Have something queer-related visible in your office.

A sticker, a poster, a flyer, a brochure, a book, a button...This will identify you as a safe person to talk to and will hopefully allow a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning person to break his/her/zir/hir/their silence.

## 3 Support, normalize and validate student's feeling about their sexuality.

Let them know that you are there for them. If you cannot be supportive, please refer them to someone who can be. Always remember the problem with homophobia not homosexuality.

## 4 Do not advice youth to come out to parents, family and friends as they need to come out at their own safe place.

Studies show as many as 26% of gay youth are forced to leave their home after they tell their parents. IT IS THEIR DECISION and they have to live with the consequences.

## 5 Guarantee confidentiality with students.

Students need to know their privacy will be respected or they will not be honest about this important issue.

## 6 Challenge homophobia.

As a role model for young people, respond to homophobia immediately and sincerely. Encourage in-service trainings for staff, classmates and students on homophobia and its impact on gay and lesbian youth.

## 7 Combat heterosexism in you classroom.

Include visibly gay and lesbian role models in your classroom.

## 8 Learn about and refer to community organizations.

Familiarize yourself with resources and call them before you refer to make sure they are ongoing.

## 9 Encourage school administrators to adopt and enforce anti-discrimination policies for their schools or school systems which include sexual orientation.

The language should be included in all written materials next to race, sex, religions, etc.

## 10 Provide role models.

Gay and straight student benefit from having openly gay teachers, coaches and administration. Straight students are given an alternative to the inaccurate stereotypes they have received and gay student are provided with the opportunity to see healthy gay adults.

Fact Sheet compiled by GLSEN, New York, NY and Youth Pride, Inc., Providence, RI